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ONE WISH

SARA BEAUMONT KENNEDY





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ONE WISH

ONE WISH

AND OTHER POEMS OF LOVE AND LIFE

By

SARA BEAUMONT KENNEDY

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TO THE MEMORY OF

Walker Kennedy and Katherine Hobson,
my husband and niece, whose fineness
of perception and purity of vision never
failed to inspire me, this book is dedicated.

S. B. K.

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ONE WISH

ONE WISH

If I might have in all the scope of life
 One wish-come-true,
Just one, and nothing more through all the years
That Sorrow shrives and Hope endears,
 'Twould be for you.

If I might have just one short prayer that found
 Its way to grace
And won an answer from fate's high decree,
That prayer, O best belovèd one, would be
 To see your face.

That wish-come-true and that one answered prayer,
 Whate'er betide,
Would be the hostage of my faith in God,
And though the hot plow-shares of life I trod
 I would be satisfied.

GOING HOME

When I went home to you, though rough and steep
 The way, I never stopped to care ;
The end was rose-hued with the light of love,
 Knowing you waited there.
I could not run too fast, O heart of mine,
 When I went home to you.

When I went home to you, no matter what
 The hours had held of toil or grief or fret
Was left outside the opened door—
 The pure, sweet smile of you made me forget
Life's burden and its bitter weariness,
 When I went home to you.

For in your calm and brave serenity
 There was no room for faith's unrest ;
You reached a hand of hope and helpfulness
 Into the darkest shadows that oppressed.
I seemed to walk straight into God's white light
 When I went home to you.

But, ah ! when I go home and find you not
 I can not leave behind the old despair ;
It dogs my steps up to the close-shut door,
 Inside of which there waits your empty chair,
And all of life's deep bitterness comes back
 When I go home and find you not.

When I go home and know you are not there
 The smoothest path is rough and hard ;
I hate the window where your light once burned.
 (I wish to God it were forever barred !)
The whole house seems a charnel place of joy
 When I go home and know you are not
 there.

OLD SONGS

A-down the years they come to me
 From out the crypts of time,
With half-forgotten melody
 And faintly failing rhyme ;
With here and there a broken chord,
 A missing word or phrase,
But sweet as angel whispers are—
 The songs of by-gone days.

A snatch of college drinking song,
 A verse of cradle hymn,
A bar of tender serenade,
 Sung when the stars were dim—

The truant strains they come and go
Like sparks in smoky haze,
A tangle of sweet memories—
The songs of by-gone days.

And as the measures float along,
Like shadows o'er the sea,
Across the bloom and drift of years
Lost faces smile on me;
Eyes dimmed in death's eternal night
Meet mine in love's long gaze,
I kiss the marble lips that sang
Those songs of by-gone days.

Old tunes touch hidden chords in hearts
Long mute with age or pain,
And give us for a fleeting space
Lost faith and hope again.
Within yon Cloudland's Far-Away
Where swell the hymns of praise
God grant the angels sometimes sing
The songs of by-gone days.

WAITING

And so we have come back again
Through wreckage of dark nights and days,
Back to the parting of the ways,
Back to the milestone of lost dreams.

And in our emptied hearts we bring
No sun-lit joy for hopes achieved,
No gratitude for grief reprieved,
No suaging sense of faith fulfilled.

Instead, turn wheresoe'er we may,
There haunts us like a lost despair
The ghost of an unanswered prayer—
The one dear thing we asked of God.

They who expound the Gospel say:

“Ye have not asked the thing ye should.”

How can we choose? How know the good
Is not the thing we want the most?

Christ made no bargain save for faith—

“Believe, and ask but in my name.”

When we do this where lies the blame
That we come empty-hearted to the end?

We can not understand. We trust

That somewhere God's high purpose waits

To solve the problem of life's hates

And loves and free-born destinies—

We only know that since our prayers

Come back unanswered of His grace

We must, of our own courage, face

The whips of fate, nor whine nor yield.

For this is self-respect. And while
We hold to this we can not lose
Our better nature, though God should refuse
To keep His promise of an answered prayer.

And so, with steadfast faith, but in ourselves,
We have come back through darkened days,
Back to the parting of the ways
To wait beside the milestone of lost dreams.

INFLUENCE IS RESPONSIBILITY

Thou canst not stand aloof and wait
For peaceful aftermath
Lest thy indifference prove a snare
In some poor toiler's path.

If so thy feet have reached the heights
Built upward toward the day,
The torch within thy lifted hand
Lights all the downward way.

And if its guiding spark be quenched
In tears of selfish dole,
One day thy God may ask of thee
Thy weaker sister's soul.

YOUR HANDS

So weak and impotent they seem,
Your two small, tired hands ;
So little might they grasp, and yet
So many tasks for them were set,
So many tangled strands.

So idle once and prone to ease,
So cared for and so white,
Now, scarred with burdens duty spread
And with the battle waged for bread,
They wait the coming night.

When at the last the Master's voice
Speaks its Divine commands
And asks the record of your work—
Or did you strive or did you shirk—
Just show Him your two hands.

'And He your service or your sloth
Will read in scar and line ;
He'll know whence all the roughness came—
Witness of help or stamp of shame,
Or love's clear counter-sign.

Invisible to human eyes
May be the secret scroll,
But naught the Master's will withstands,
And by the witness of your hands
He'll one day judge your soul.

A HUNDRED YEARS

A hundred years from now, dear heart,
They say we will not care
For suns that scorch or winds that wreck,
Or burdens we must bear.
A hundred years from now the rose
Of love will wilted lie,
And asphodels of endless death
Will signal to the sky.

A hundred years from now, dear heart,
They say the tears we shed
Will be forgot, the hot, salt tears
That could not wake our dead.
A hundred years, the vibrant song
That hope sang to the stars
Will be a silence of the soul,
A stillness nothing mars.

A hundred years—What then? A void,
A deep abysmal gloom?
Or radiant vistas, music-sweet,
Of life and love and bloom?
A hundred years! We may not care
E'en as the wise ones say;
But God! Those crawling hundred years
Ere we outlive To-day!

STRANDED

It lies in shallows, half a-shore,
A-swing beyond the billows' play,
A warped, deserted, battered hulk
That has sailed out its little day.

To what far ports it took its flight,
What sails gleamed at its broken mast,
What costly cargoes piled its decks,
What pilot steered it home at last

We may not know ; just only this :
It served its purpose out and now
It lies brown-ribbed upon the sand
With gaping seams and rotting prow.

But lying thus, we know it waits
For some storm-ridden, moonless night
When lifted clear of rock and reef
'Twill put to sea without a light.

And free and far for one fierce hour
'Twill breast the deep it roamed of yore,
Then from the crest of some high wave
Go down to sail no more, no more !

But ere it sinks it will have known
Once more the thrill of outward reach,
And better that one teeming hour
Than stagnant years upon the beach !

.

STRANDED

And there are souls that, stranded, wait
For flood-tide help to break away
From shallow sloughs and sunken rocks,
And seek the ports of Outer Day.

'Mid stress of storm and racing wind
That whitens all the sea with foam,
Some day they'll hear the Pilot's call
And see the harbor lights of Home.

But stranded men, like stranded ships,
Die better for an hour of strife—
One strong up-lift, one victory cry,
One challenge flung to love and life.

FAILURE

To strive and not succeed, yet still have strength
To stifle back the moan and chide the pain,
And rise once more and bravely seek to trace
A new foothold among life's broken shards
 Which pierce us with regret—
That is not failure, but the soul's high test,
That is to grow toward God in grace,
 Yea, to be born again.

But, oh! to miss the goal, and to sink down
With shaking hands beside the upward trail,
Too spent to lift again life's weary load,
Too numb to find a light, or in the dark a sign,
 Or in the heart a hope—
That is to drink of Marah's bitter cup,
That is to feel fate's biting goad,
 That is at last to fail.

LET YOUR WOMEN KEEP SILENCE

I CORINTHIANS 14:34

And who laid on her this silence,
Some one who had never abhorred
The Beautiful Teacher of Wisdom?
Nay, one who had mocked at his Lord—

One who hounded with threatenings
Disciples who worked out His will,
One who “breathed slaughter” against them—
He said: “Let a woman keep still.”

She may not speak in your temples,
It is not "seemly" nor right?—
And yet 'tis her faith that through ages
Has kept its clear tapers a-light.

For man had gone back to the savage,
Forgetting the soul and its need,
Yea, lapsed to the club and the cave-house
Had woman not held to her creed.

White-souled as the radiant lilies
That bloom in the muck of the sod,
She may not speak in your temples—
Yet a woman was mother of God!

SOMEWHERE, SOME DAY

Somewhere, some day, nor time nor place
Our hearts may set,
Although the longing stifles us
And eyes grow wet—

Somewhere, some day, in lush of bloom
Or drift of snow,
In dusk of dark lit by dim stars,
In noon's white glow—

The things we hoped but dared not speak
The long years through,
The dearest dreams that haunt our hearts
Will all come true.

I can not tell why I believe;
By subtle sign
I know we'll walk the sun-lit hills,
Your hand in mine.

I can not see where those hills lift
Their verdant way,
But, ah! I know we'll find the heights
Somewhere, some day.

And there we'll gather up our dreams
And count them o'er;
Your whispering lips close at my ear
Forever more.

MY PRAYER

I do not trouble God with small requests,
I earn, not ask my daily bread;
'Tis for my toiling hands to keep
The sheltering roof above my head—
I do not weary God with such behests.

For if each day I am to beg and whine
About His knees for food and drink,
Why did He give me strength and skill,
Why have I power to plan and think—
Why am I different from the browsing kine?

When He placed me erect and taught me speech,
When He gave me a hand and not a claw,
He therewith, and for ages, laid
Upon my soul the steadfast law
Of self-dependence and of onward reach.

And so I do not trouble Him with small requests,
Begging each day a crust of bread,
Waiting for Him, by miracle,
To keep the roof-tree o'er my head—
I do not weary God with such behests.

And yet I pray,
Yea, in my heart is one unceasing prayer
And on my lips a never-dying song—
That God will teach me how to make
My daily choice 'twixt right and wrong
That I may play life's game, and play it fair!

O LITTLE FEET

O little feet, O little feet
That ran so swift and gay
A-down the road to Happiness
When hope was in its May—
O little feet that never tired,
Each milestone was a friend
That lured you down the path to where
Love waited at the end!

O little feet, O little feet,
How slowly you came back
Along the road from Happiness,
How rough and hard the track!
Your dancing step you have forgot,
Each stone and thorn you find,
You limp where once you stepped so light,
For love is left behind.

O little feet, O little feet,
You've learned the heart-break song—
The road to Happiness is short,
The backward trail is long!
The milestones that with beckoning hand
Cheered all the onward way
Like specters haunt the silent lane
That leads from Arcady!

THREE SINGERS

In the years' white dawn three singers came
Out of the mists of time,
And touched their harps 'neath her window high
And sang her a golden rhyme.
Sang, as she waited behind the pane
In a rift of sun or ripple of rain,
For the fateful thing that should be a sign;
While her fingers plucked at the twisted vine.

One Singer was Wealth, and jewels gleamed
As he struck his twanging strings;
And he chanted the amber wine of joy
And the pleasure its quaffing brings.
And she leaned to see where the trail would
run,
And saw the shadow spread over the sun
When the gold had melted some far, sad day;
And she flung him a leaf, and turned away.

One Singer was Fame, and place and power
And plaudits and peans of praise
He promised her if she'd follow him
Far out of the valley's maze.
And she leaned to look where the pathway
shone,
And she saw she must travel it all alone
So narrow it was and cramped and low;
And she flung him a thorn, and let him go.

One Singer was Love, and his voice was sweet
As wind blown out of the South.

No fame he offered, no lure of gold ;

But a kiss for her warm, red mouth.

And she leaned to glimpse where the path ran
through,

And she saw there was room a-plenty for two—

For two to walk and never to part ;

And she flung him a rose, and the rose was
her heart !

ON THE TRAIL

Choose him alone to be thy guide
Who has gone further on the road,
Who knows its pitfalls and has borne
In stress of pain its bitter load.
He will not let thee miss the way
Though paths divide and clouds be gray.

Let him thy mentor be whose soul
Has known the passion of despair ;
Whose eyes have watched an empty trail
Through nights of gloom and days of care.
His quickened vision will be keen
To see life's shadow 'neath its sheen.

To learn forgiveness look to him
Who has been wronged in word and deed,
Whose heart has ached with trust betrayed,
Yet faltered not in love's high creed ;
He only can thy master be
To climb white heights of charity.

THE WRITING IN THE SAND

They dragged her to the Master's feet
Abashed with shame and numb with dread.
"We know the law that Moses wrote,
But judge you her," the fierce mob said.

She stood deserted and abhorred,
The world-wide type of such as she,
While in safe haunts and pleasant ways
The partner of her guilt went free.

In her scared eyes the wonder grew
That she alone the shame must know,
Yet dumb she waited, breast a-heave,
To feel the mob's first stinging blow.

Then Jesus said: "The sinless one
May cast the stone that's in his hand."
And while the conscience-stricken mob dispersed
He stooped and wrote upon the sand.

Wrote on the sand the mystic line
The probing ages fain would scan;
Perchance the wondering woman read
The letters dim: "Where is the man?"

The woman climbs her Calvary here,
Outlawed and scorned and set aside;
Each day, with sneer of good and bad,
Her spirit is re-crucified;

The while the man, more scarlet far
 Since he was tempter to her soul,
Goes down the sunny side of life
 Unhindered of his dearest goal.

Yet who may say he shall escape?
 When life has run its little span
He'll read that writing in the dust
 And, trembling, say: "I am the man."

THE SOLSTICES

It does not always fall in June—
The longest day of all the year,
Which in the calends doth appear
Set down by rule inviolate
As more of sun than moon.

But, sweet, for me the longest day,
The one that seems to have no end,
The blankest time the seasons send—
Or red with June or bleached with snow—
Is when you are away.

And, sweetheart mine, of all the year—
Despite December's ancient claim—
The shortest day, with heart of flame
And flying feet that will not stay,
Is when I hold you near.

ONE DAY

'Tis said, sweetheart, that in each life
 There dawns one perfect day ;
One day so white with touch of love
It matters not if skies above
 Be blue or gray—

One day so steeped in peace and dreams
 That we forget
Hearts ever ached, or that with tears
That hid the vista of the years
 Eyes have been wet.

Yet some there are who miss that day
And blindly go,
Nor glimpse the radiance from afar,
Nor in the dusk catch one faint star ;
But, ah, sweetheart, I'll know !

I'll know when o'er the purple hills
From crypts of night
The first ray creeps, all amber-pale,
And downward slips athwart the vale—
Translucent light.

It may not differ from all days—
No more of cloud or clear,
But, heart of mine, the blessed light
Will give you to my yearning sight,
And I shall hold you near.

I care not if the sun shall shine
Or rains drip silver gray,
If snow lies white, or blooms the lea—
The time that brings you back to me
Shall be my perfect day !

SHIP O' DREAMS

A white, white sail spread over my ship,
As white as a gull's wing gleams ;
And it weighed its anchor and slipped away
When the years were young and the heart was gay—
My beautiful ship o' dreams.

'Twas freighted with love that was ever to last
Though faith and friends should fail ;
And its prow was set to the golden west
Where the sun sinks down in a haven of Rest
And the storm-wraiths never wail.

And far and away it sailed and sailed,
Its free, white wings unfurled,
Still and forever a-tracking the sun
In a shining path where the bright waves run—
Run over the rim of the world.

.

But it never came back into port, my ship,
Never came back from its quest ;
Though I lighted my beacons high up on the trail
Its cargo of hope went down in the gale
Outside of the haven of Rest.

And oft when the day dies down to the dark
I look where the sunset streams,
And I seem to see, all ghostly and pale,
A broken prow and a tattered sail—
The wreck o' my ship o' dreams !

RED ROSES

FEBRUARY FOURTEEN

Roses for my lady fair,
Roses red as wine!
They are the heralds that shall say
To her upon this love-sweet day
She is my valentine!

For since the old-time saint was young
 (Unless the legend errs),
When tender words were to be said
To just one heart, the roses red
 Have been love's messengers.

Their language is a secret code
 With cipher planned
To spell a tender sweetheart creed,
Which lovers' eyes alone may read,
 And lovers understand.

So at St. Valentine's behest
 This day I choose,
To fly as swift as homing dove
And bear my lady all my love,
 The heart of this red rose!

MY SONG

I made me a song, and I fared me forth
To find who would listen and weep.
For I told the sorrowful truths of life—
The vigils our souls must keep,

The failures that lurk where the path runs rough,
The ambushed sorrow that waits,
The biting bitter out-tasting the sweet
In cup that is brewed of the Fates.

And my song I sang to a child at play,
But he put his hand to his ear:
"Oh, I like a tune with a laugh," he cried,
"This one has the drip of a tear."

A soldier, belted and girded for fight,
With his banners flashing on high,
Scoffed loud at my lay: "Of glory I dream;
What has fame to do with a sigh?"

Two lovers who strolled in the faint star-gleam
At sound of my voice turned back:
"To us the whole world is roseate and gold,
Why chant of a shadow that's black?"

And I sang my song to a man who toiled
In the hellish dark of a mine,
But he cursed the strain with a snarling jibe,
For he wanted the sweet sunshine.

Then an aged crone put my rhyme to shame
With a shake of her wise, gray head:
“I’ve come to the edge of the grave with grief,
Make me laugh as I die,” she said.

So I tore my sorrowful song to shreds
And I cast it out to the wilds,
For I’d learned, though the world be eons old,
Its heart is as young as a child’s.

THE LITTLE THINGS

God sends us little joys for daily diet—
The kindly word, the outstretched hand,
The smile our hearts can understand,
A song of hope, an hour of quiet.

And with them come the little griefs and cares—
The broken trysts, the rainy days,
The slighting word, the dearth of praise,
Each stab that in a heartache shares.

And little sacrifices day by day
Wait at our doors—the wish suppressed,
The yielded place, the fault confessed,
Self set aside, love's long delay.

These are our hourly gleanings in the strife,
These humble flow'rs, so small and trite ;
The wonder-blooms of love and pain blow white
(Like altar lilies for a solemn rite),
But one time in the span of life.

YESTERDAY

Where runs the road to Yesterday,
Does nobody, nobody know?
It can't be far, for I traveled it
When the sun was sinking low.

All of you journeyed the self-same path—
Will nobody, nobody tell?
Is it by the rocks or over the hills,
Or where the white tides swell?

It must be near, for I only turned
A corner and entered the night,
And I slept not long, for my heart was sore
For a glimpse of the backward light.

But, oh, somehow I have lost the trail—
The foot-worn trail that pilgrims made
Journeying up from the Wonderland
Facing the east and unafraid.

But I must go back, go back, you see ;
(Will nobody show me the way?)
For I've left my heart and my hope behind
In the land of Yesterday.

But how may I know the grass-grown path?
Where glimmers the mystical line?
I scan the far horizon's hem
In quest of a hidden sign—

But never a guide post points the way
And never a milestone shows,
And nobody walks the forgotten track,
For nobody, nobody knows.

TIRED

Ah, no ; 'tis not for strength I pray ;
Once, long ago, there was a day
 When all my prayer,
Vibrant with pleading, was for power
To bear the burden of each hour
 Nor cry for aid.

It was for silent lips, for eyes unwet,
For heart that sought but to forget
 That I implored—
For calm of spirit that should lie
As soft as dawn on eastern sky
 When night is done.

But now I ask for these no more.
Here at the Morning's open door
 I cast my burden down ;
I've carried it the long years through,
And though each step it heavier grew
 I stumbled on.

Yea, groped and strove, but now for lack
Of strength and hope I give it back
 To you who gave.
You carry it, dear Lord, a while,
A day's length or a little mile—
 I am so tired.

THE NINTH HOUR

GOOD FRIDAY

No sea is always calm ; no ship
Sails out its little day without despair ;
The flood-tide hides the sunken rocks with peace,
The ebbing leaves them bare.
Yea, bare and snarling in the foam
Tossed in white wreaths up to the deck,
And on the quiet sands to-morrow's sun
May rise upon a wreck.

No life is always safe; no soul
So free and fair but it must know
The awful desolation that abides
In some "ninth hour" of woe—
Some black and bitter time when we lose God
And faith and hope and fealty,
And in the heart is one accusing cry.
"Lama sabachthani!"

And yet, does God forsake, or is it we
Who can not see or understand?
Shall we not find Him where the shadows fall
If we put forth a hand?
The deepest dark comes just before the day,
From storms the brightest stars are born,
And that "ninth hour" may but the prelude be
Of some fair Easter dawn.

COMRADES THREE

Nay, not alone
When, sunrise signals in the sky
And in the hedge the thrush's cry,
She took the long, long trail.

Three with her walked,
Three comrades down each sunny slope,
And one was Love, and one was Hope,
And one was Faith supreme.

And life was joy,
Until one black and bitter day
Love faltered on the upward way,
Faltered and lost the step.

And when at last,
White-faced as one who bears a load,
She took again the onward road,
Two only walked with her.

Then Hope that erst
Had always laughed, or rough or smooth
the track,
Forgot his song and turned him back,
A-whimper for his mate.

And though she called
He answered not, but stayed to weep
And by the side of dead Love keep
A vigil through the dark.

And so but one
Came with her to the journey's end,
Where sunset banners droop and blend—
But one of all the three.

For Faith abides,
When night's black ensigns fill the sky
It puts the crowding shadows by
And shows the quiet stars.

And yet she knows
That somewhere, somehow she will find
The Love and Hope she left behind
Waiting where ends the road.

WHAT THEN?

Let us forget,
For, like a sharp stiletto turned
In gaping wound, is Memory ;
The old songs and the old sweet loves
Stab deep with keenest misery.
The thoughts of by-gone days are nails
That crucify with bitter woe—
Why should we suffer day by day?
Why should our lives no respite know?
Let us forget!

And yet, and yet,
If we should put away the past,
Should bury it so deep, so deep
That not a wraith of all its days
With our sad souls a tryst could keep—
If love, with all its tender dreams
Should to oblivion succumb—
If we indeed forgot, then what
For all the empty years to come
Would there be left?

DAY AFTER DAY

JANUARY FIRST

It lies before, the year's untrodden road ;
How can we journey all its length,
How bear the crowding burdens of the way?
So small our courage and our strength!

But singing through the silence comes
To give us hope, this truth sublime :
*We do not live the whole long year at once,
God sends it one day at a time.*

One day for Joy that laughs at care
And holds with Love its tender tryst ;
One day when every passing hour
Is winged with gold and amethyst—

One day for grief, when Sorrow sits
And brews her bitter cup of pain
And croons for us that age-old rune
That has a heart-ache for refrain.

For each day God has set the stakes
Where hot sands scorch or roses blow ;
Each nightfall finds one journey done,
Each eve a respite we shall know.

And so, despite the shadow's gloom
We take the road with faith sublime,
Content to know, though long the year,
God sends it one day at a time.

RAINBOW'S END

Let us play the game of the younger years,
The sweet old game of "Just pretend;"
Let us steal apart from the Now and Here
And hie us away to the rainbow's end.

Let us pretend we are back once more
On the trail we lost in the long ago,
When rose-hued June leaned over the hills
And shook her rain on the fields below.

Let us pretend that the gray, gray days,
Which now we walk with tear-blind eyes,
Are filtered through with the seven-hued light
That slipped in an arch from the clouded skies.

Let us pretend that the bag of gold
That's lying there at the rainbow's end
Is the love we lost in the faded years
Ere ever we needed to "just pretend."

Let us pretend, for 'tis only thus
In make-believe we catch the sign
Of the "love, love, love!" that the robins sang
At the rainbow's end—O heart of mine!

LOVERS' LANE

Side by side with the highway of life
 With only a space between—
A space so narrow we reach across
 And pluck a sprig o' the green—
Runs another road, or over the hill
 Or over the sun-bright plain
Or down where the cliffs slip into the sea,
 And we call it Lovers' Lane.

There tall, white lilies forever nod,
 There the roses blow blood red,
And like incarnate spirit of hope
 A thrush sings high o'erhead.

The violets say: "Be true, be true,"
In passionate, soft refrain;
And the sun by day and the steadfast stars
Keep watch over Lovers' Lane.

And all of us walk at some sweet time
There under the arching boughs,
And catch the gleam of a crimson rose,
The whisper of tender vows.
Out of the sordid sorrows of life
To castles we built in Spain,
We go through the mists of golden dreams
By the way of Lovers' Lane.

And into the dusk of the after years
We take the memory sweet
Of the lips we kissed and of vows we heard,
And the pulses' quickened beat.
The highway of life may be snow-bleached
Or sodden of tears and rain,
But the roses bloom and the lilies nod
Forever in Lovers' Lane.

BON VOYAGE

So many ships put out to sea,
So many silver sails
Go dipping through the lilac dawn
To where the skyline fails;
So many ships—but, ah! just one
Sails with my heart to meet the sun.

So many roses blowing wide
'Neath kiss of vagrant wind,
So many petals pearled with dew
The eager seekers find;
But, ah! one rose—the reddest one—
Lifts up my heart to meet the sun.

For just one ship bears o'er the tide
Love's dearest and its best,
And just one rose of all the world
She wears upon her breast.
Ah, ship and rose and tides that run,
My heart goes with you 'neath the sun!

SONG

I meant to work so hard to-day,
See naught but tasks to do,
But—I glimpsed your face amid the crowd,
And I dreamed all day of you.

I meant to toil through every hour,
Deaf to the calls that rise,
But—I heard you laugh at my open door,
And I thought all day of your eyes.

I meant to finish each weary task,
Dumbly doing my part,
But—oh, the smile of your rose-warm mouth
Has lived all day in my heart!

So what does it matter at evensong
That all my work's undone,
Since—e'en in a dream, I went with you
A-gypsying into the sun!

DAY'S END

Day's end—and behind us lie
The good or the gilded wrong
That have filled the space of the day's sweet grace,
Ere the coming of evensong.

Day's end—hush, hush, my heart,
Fear not what the night may hold
For a mist of moon and shimmer of stars
Lie close in its ebon fold.

Year's end—and the months roll back
As a scroll unwound by chance
And the red of the rose meets pallor of snows
Like the ghost of an old romance.

Year's end—be still, my heart,
What matters a broken dream?
For a new, sweet love with April eyes
Will wait where the violets gleam.

Life's end? What, then, is a day,
And what is a whole long year
But a finished rhyme in the hymn of Time
Which ever the angels hear?

Life's end? Heart, O my heart,
List the dead years' far refrain
And know by the rise and set of the stars
The end means beginning again!

THE HILLS OF GOD

The hills of God are hard to climb,
 O tender little feet ;
They stand up high above the plain
And beckon to the wind and rain,
And one is Faith and one is Pain,
 O tired little feet !

The upward trails are flanked with thorns,
 O little pilgrim heart ;
The stones that shine so white ahead
Are sacrificial altars spread,
Where you must leave your passions, dead,
 O little pilgrim heart !

But, ah, the hills of God they lean so close
 Against the feet of God,
You see from off their sun-lit crest
The goal that is your prayerful quest
And hear the voice you've loved the best
 High on the hills of God.

FATE'S TRINITY

Three things there are fate asks of us,
Three things to test and prove
The God-spark lingers in our souls—
To laugh, to lift, to love.

To laugh, brave-hearted, at despair,
Meet sorrow without fear,
And through the darkness of defeat
To send a word of cheer—

To bear a burden without whine
However steep the road,
To reach a lifting hand to ease
A fellow traveler's load—

To hear above hope's happy song
A hurt heart's cry for aid ;
To love the bruised and maimed and sad,
To live all unafraid.

THE WANDER-WAY

Springtime—and the bluebird's song
And gold of daffodils,
And the beckoning trail that runs
Away to the waiting hills ;
These—and a low, clear call
At my restless heart all day
With pilgrim staff to be out and gone
Over the Wander-Way !

Gone where the reeds, a-quiver,
Sing like the pipes o' Pan,
And the gleam of the golden willows
Marks where the spring began ;

With never a pack on my shoulders
The speed of my step to stay,
Tracking a will-o'-the-wisp decoy
Over the Wander-Way.

Winds from the fragrant Southland
Seeking some Holy Grail
Stir purple lure of violets spread
Beside the half-hid trail ;
While high o'er head an argosy,
White-sailed, drifts all the day—
Cloud-ships by unseen pilots steered
Over the Wander-Way.

Oh, to be free as the birds are,
Swift as the winds are swift
To hit the trail that winds away
To where the dim hills lift,
And there to hail a white cloud-ship
Bound for the ports of day,
And sail, and sail—and never come back
Over the Wander-Way!

THE MASTER'S TOLL

Three things the Master asks of you,
 Though strong or weak, or high or low,
 Or want or riches you may know,
 Three tolls He levies as you go,
Nor takes denial on your part—

A steadfast will His love exacts,
 The will to meet each daily grind
 Of sordid chaff and in it find
 (In spite of hindering tears that blind)
The golden grain of sweet content—

A hand that's never too close shut
To share its shining garnered gold,
Nor yet too callous nor too cold
Another hand to softly fold
Nor miss the throbbing pulse of pain—

A heart that hearkens day and night
To fainting cries from "out the deep,"
A heart that wakes while others sleep,
That shares a joy, and yet doth keep
A tryst with those who know despair.

This is the toll the Master takes.
The love, the help, the purpose high
Are yours to give, nor reason why;
His answer will come by and by
When life has blossomed into death.

'ALL SOULS

(On All Souls' Night the dead are supposed to be allowed to return to earth for a sight of old haunts and once familiar faces.)

This night, just this one only night
They may come back again,
The souls that have passed through the Gates,
Shrived of all earthly stain.

So many myriad hurrying ones,
So many seeking those
They knew and loved, ere on life's day
Fell death's eternal close.

So many changes in the world,
So many homes removed,
Suppose—Ah, God! you will not let them miss
The way to those they loved!

Through dim, mysterious distances
To where we wait alone,
The instinct of a homing-heart
Will bring them to their own.

UNANSWERED

I

Unanswered, did you say, your prayer to tread
Always the shining paths of perfect peace—
To bask day after day in deep content
That comes of hope attained, of pain's surcease?

Unanswered? Yea, for 'tis a selfish cry,
A plea to shirk and not to bravely bear;
Why should you think that God would take away.
Each little cross that is your rightful share?

II

Unanswered, did you say, your prayer for strength
To meet the heartache and the woe of years,
To see, clear-eyed, where paths of duty lead
Nor miss the way through dusk of unshed tears?

Unanswered? Nay, look deep within your heart;
Read there the patience 'neath the outward fret,
Watch how your hands reach out to helpful tasks,
And know by these that God does not forget.

SWEETEST EYES

SONG

I

Sweetest eyes that ever
 Laughed into my own,
Not a cloud of sorrow
 Have you ever known.
Hope is beckoning to you
 O'er the hills of fame
And each grayest ember
 Holds a heart of flame.
 Love is waiting, waiting,
 Like a rose just blown—
Sweetest eyes that ever
 Laughed into my own.

II

Saddest eyes that ever
 Looked into my own,
All of life's deep tragedy
 You have surely known.
Dimmed with night-long vigils,
 Through the cruel years
You have told hope's rosary
 With your bitter tears.
 Light of love and laughter
 From your depths has flown—
Saddest eyes that ever
 Looked into my own!

ANNIVERSARIES

How they do search the soul of us,
 Those annual recurrent days
That from all time are set apart
By some dread loss, some throb of heart,
Some venomed touch of poisoned dart,
 Some parting of the ways.

On such a day our unleashed thoughts
 Run down the vanished years,
And single from time's rosary
The golden beads of memory
That are the heart's best legacy
 Or heritage of tears.

"'Twas here we met," we say, and feel
The pulses' old delicious start;
"Here bloomed our rose of love." And:
"Here"——

(O death, why did you come so near,
Were not there those far much less dear?)
"Here God did break my heart!"

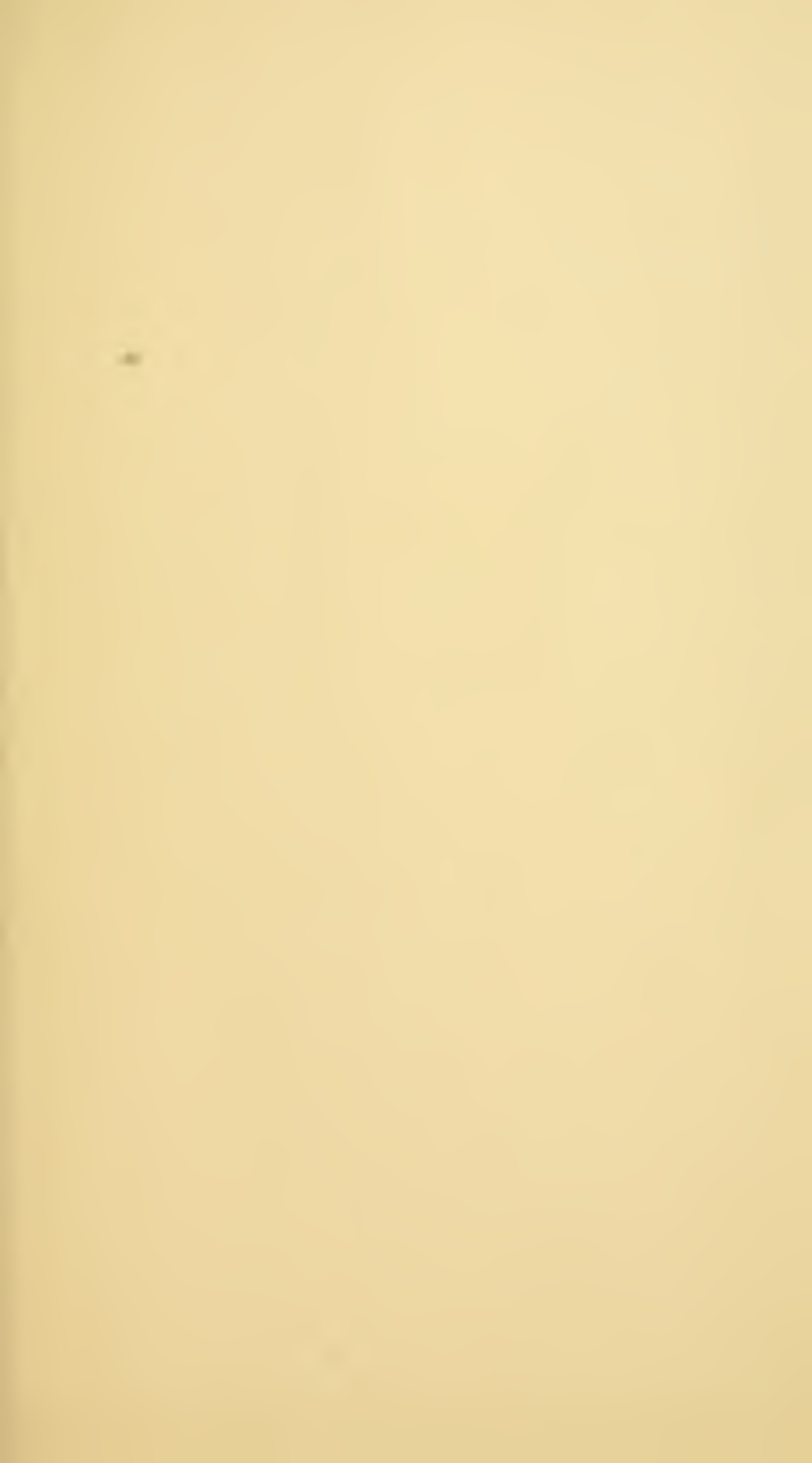
And as we live again the scenes—
Or sweet or sad they be—
We cry aloud but just to know
If they who shared that Long-ago
Can feel, across death's midnight flow,
A stir of memory.

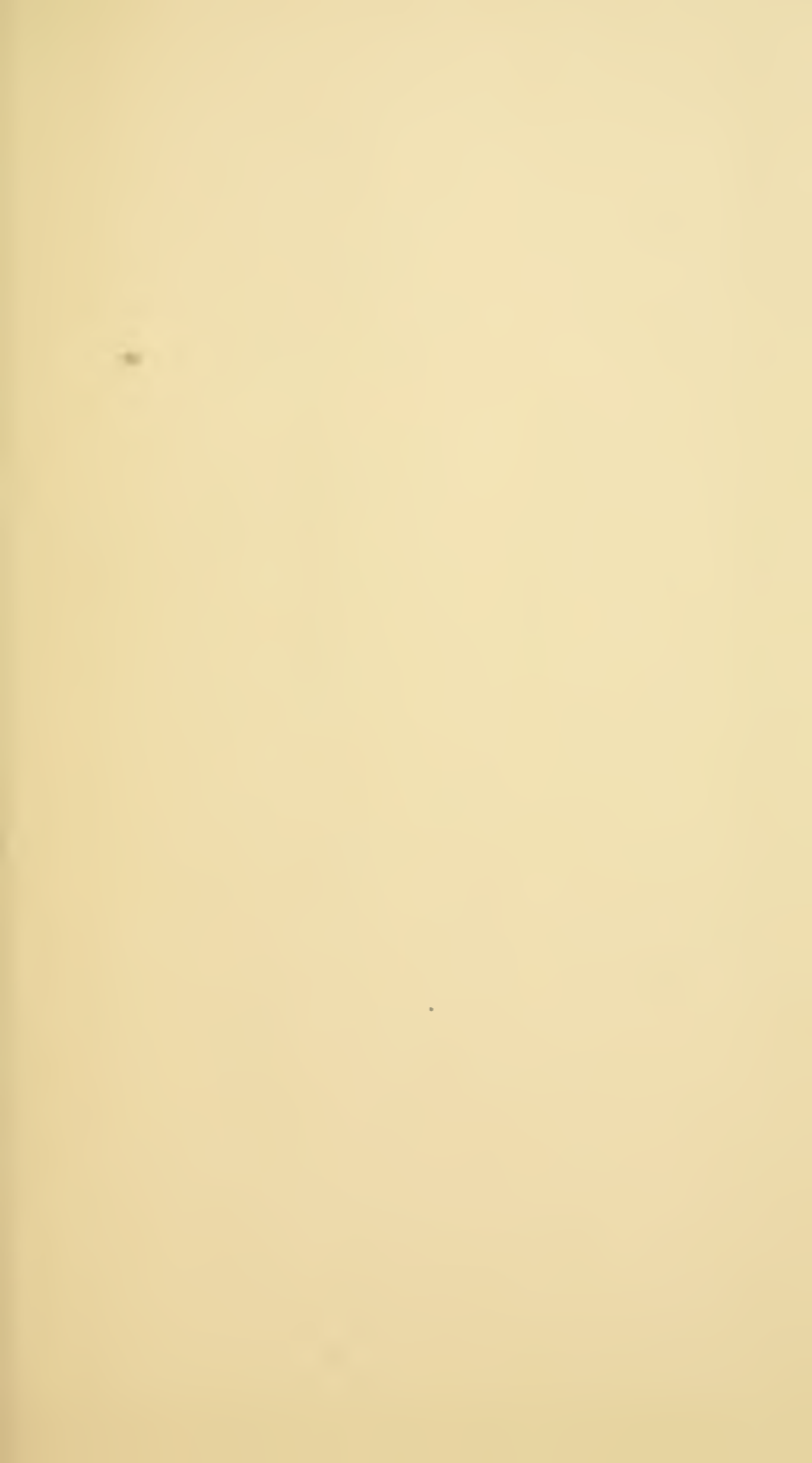
For if Love lives beyond the stars,
If Faith outlasts the years,
Then surely those who've gone before,
Upon these days will reach once more
To us a hand-touch as of yore
And keep a tryst of tears.

CONTENT

Grant that I be content ; yet, Lord,
Not wholly so,
Lest losing thus ambition's goad
Life's apathy I know.

The victor's palms are oftentimes wet
With tears that shrive ;
Make me content to find it so
Yet still content to strive.











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